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UNHCR ACTIVITIES FINANCED BY VOLUNTARY FUNDS: REPORT FOR 1993-1994 AND PROPOSED PROGRAMMES AND BUDGET FOR 1995

PART I. AFRICA

Section 5 - Central African Republic

(submitted by the High Commissioner)

GE.94-03389

I.5 CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Country Overview

Characteristics of the refugee population

1. At 31 December 1993, the Central African Republic hosted 44,129 refugees, comprising 23,326 Sudanese, 20,708 Chadians, 29 Burundi, 19 Rwandese, nine Angolans, eight Ugandans and 30 refugees of various other origins. Of the total, 34,533 were assisted. Below is a breakdown of the total refugee population by origin, demographic characteristics, location and type of assistance:

Country of origin	Number 01/01/93	Number 31/12/93	Per cent M / F / C	Location	Type of assistance
Sudan	17,647	23,183 24	32/23/45	M'boki Urban areas	CM, LS
Sudan	98	119	100/0/0	Kaga-Bandoro	CM
Chad	1,185	11,109 9,532	24/23/53	Boubou Elsewhere	EM not assisted
Chad	55	67	52/33/15	Kaga-Bandoro	CM, LS
Various	55	31 64	75/20/5	Bangui	RP not assisted

2. Amongst the Sudanese refugees, all of whom were assisted in 1993, there were 7,476 men of 18 years and above, 3,140 boys from 5 through 17, 1,778 boys aged between 0 and 4 years, 5,441 women of 18 years and above, 3,805 girls between 5 and 17 and 1,686 girls between 0 and 4. Amongst the assisted population of 11,176 Chadian refugees, there were 2,662 men of 18 years and above, 1,617 boys between 5 and 17 and 1,341 boys between 0 and 4 years, 2,564 women of 18 years and above, 1,599 girls between 5 and 17, 1,393 girls between 0 and 4 years. Amongst the Chadian refugees settled at Boubou, there is a higher percentage of children than amongst the Sudanese refugees settled at M'boki.

Major developments (1993 and first quarter 1994)

3. The first quarter of 1994 saw an increase in numbers of both Chadian and Sudanese refugees resulting from changes in the political and military situation in their countries of origin. During that period, some 350 Sudanese refugees per month registered as new arrivals at M'boki, and nearly 100 Chadian refugees arrived per month at Boubou.

4. In January 1994, the World Food Programme (WFP) made an assessment for an airlift of food to M'boki to fill the gap between the needs of the refugees and

delivery capacity, especially during the rainy season. A joint UNHCR/WFP mission, comprising Desk Officers from the Headquarters of both agencies and led by the Director of WFP in the Central African Republic, visited the country from 23 March to 7 April 1994.

5. The purpose of this joint mission was to assess the food situation in the refugee settlements at M'boki and Boubou with a particular emphasis on the high internal transport, storage and handling (ITSH) costs for the feeding operation in M'boki. After verification of the 1994 harvest in M'boki, WFP will cease food assistance at the end of their current project (March 1995).

6. The joint mission noted with appreciation that the Chadian refugees already produce a certain amount of food. An evaluation of the 1994 harvest will also be made in Boubou to ascertain that the degree of food self-sufficiency is at a level that would allow discontinuation of food assistance at the end of 1994.

7. At Kaga-Bandoro, where over 100 Sudanese refugees were settled away from their compatriots in M'boki, a certain degree of uneasiness between the refugees and the local population has been noted. Tensions came to a head at the end of March, when the Sudanese settlement was burnt down by the local population. Most of the Chadians in this area, who were also separated from their compatriots, appear to have integrated more easily.

8. Leaders of the Comité de sursaut national pour la paix et la démocratie (CSNPD), to which the majority of the Chadian refugees at Boubou settlement claim to be affiliated, approached UNHCR to discuss voluntary repatriation. The questions of legal guarantees for repatriation and assistance for reintegration were raised by the members of the CSNPD. The Government of the Central African Republic invited UNHCR to attend the peace negotiations between the Government of Chad and the CSNPD which were held under its auspices. UNHCR accepted, on a humanitarian basis, to extend its good offices on the understanding that repatriation assumes the establishment of peace in Chad, at least in the south, from where the refugees originate.

Programme objectives and priorities

9. Given that the political situation in southern Sudan is not conducive to mass voluntary repatriation this year, 1994 priorities are to ensure that assistance to Sudanese refugees in the M'boki settlement is increased to a level that will help the refugees obtain food self-sufficiency and better integration into development activities.

10. To achieve these objectives, emphasis will be placed in 1994 on providing inputs to encourage agricultural production and other income-generating activities, as well as strengthening the health, sanitation and water sectors. As nearly half of the Sudanese refugee population is comprised of children under 18, but only a small proportion is able to attend school, new primary school classrooms will be built around the centre and in the new surrounding areas of the settlement.

11. Efforts will be made to overcome logistical problems arising from M'boki's geographical location. The condition of the last 280 kilometers of the road from Bangassou causes delays and results in very high delivery costs.

12. Following the destruction of the settlement at Kaga-Bandoro, where over 100 Sudanese refugees were accommodated, it will be necessary to rehabilitate this settlement and cater to the basic needs of the now destitute refugees. A group of 67 Chadians was also transferred to Kaga-Bandoro, because of difficulties in living with their compatriots, and it is planned to establish a presence there through an operational partner.

13. Although peace negotiations have begun between the Government of Chad and the CSNPD, conditions are still not conducive to mass voluntary repatriation, and the influx into the Central African Republic is continuing. The priorities in 1994 for Chadians at the Boubou settlement are therefore to encourage the refugees in their efforts at agricultural production and integration into the socio-economic structure of the asylum country in order to be able to discontinue food assistance by the end of the year. Attention should also be paid to the needs and integration possibilities of the new arrivals.

14. It has been noted that the high percentage of school-aged children amongst the Chadians calls for a strengthening of the education sector. The fact that they have come from French medium schools will facilitate their adaptation to their new environment. However, secondary school children have to be accommodated at Bossangoa, which is too far from the settlement for daily transport. Possible solutions are being reviewed.

Arrangements for implementation/related inputs

15. The refugee assistance programme is implemented by the Commission nationale pour les refugiés (CNR), Organisation canadienne pour la solidarité et le développement (OCSD), Action internationale contre la faim (AICF) and Africare. The Government, through the Ministry of the Interior, pays the salaries of CNR officials, and UNHCR contributes certain indemnities linked to their functions in the implementation of the programme. OCSD contributes partly to the refugee programme from its own funds for development in the country. The United States Government also contributes part of the overhead costs of the Africare partnership with UNHCR, and AICF has made a contribution to the programme in Boubou.

16. WFP provided basic food and ITSH costs for some 3,100 metric tons of food during 1993 and the first quarter of 1994, at a cost of some $ 2.8 million, for the Sudanese and Chadian refugees at M'boki, Boubou and Kaga-Bandoro. The cost for the provision of basic food assistance for 1994 for the present caseload is estimated at $ 3.5 million, with a termination date of March 1995 for M'boki and December 1994 for Boubou, depending on an assessment of the 1994 harvest to be made in November/December 1994. Owing to road conditions in the eastern part of the Central African Republic, it was decided to move the WFP Extended Delivery Point for food for new arrivals to Rafai. This obliges UNHCR to meet the excessive transport cost from Rafai to M'boki while seeking funds for road repairs.

17. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) provided seeds and agricultural tools for Chadian refugees at the Boubou settlement in 1994 and has offered its technical guidance in the area of agricultural production.

18. The German Embassy has pledged a donation to the municipality of M'boki to provide an operating table and gynaecological equipment for the UNHCR-built hospital.

19. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies made a donation of used clothes for Sudanese refugees at M'boki.

General Programmes

(a) Variations in planned activities in 1993

Emergency assistance

20. The unexpected, continuing increase in the Chadian refugee population during 1993 put a strain on the assistance planned in the first quarter of the year. Nearly 20,000 Chadians arrived in the Central African Republic in 1993, and $ 1,511,400 had to be made available from the Emergency Fund to accommodate a large number of them at the Boubou settlement. However, some 8,000 chose to remain near the border.

21. Construction by AICF of the planned infrastructure for Boubou settlement, with an operational base at Boubou village and a new dispensary at the site, was extended into 1994.

Care and maintenance

22. Nearly 6,000 refugees came from the Sudan, which affected the implementation of the care and maintenance programme for Sudanese in M'boki. The poor state of the road also affected the delivery of assistance to the refugee population in that settlement. Seeds were not delivered in time to meet the planting season, which affected the agricultural production and perpetuated the dependency of the old caseload on food assistance.

Local settlement

23. Owing to the increase in the number of refugees, more funds had to be allocated for education assistance to the newly arrived Chadian refugee students and for the inclusion of French language courses for Sudanese refugee students.

(b) 1994 planned implementation

Care and maintenance

24. In 1994, a new agency, Africare, joined the programme in M'boki with three experts in health, water and agriculture to strengthen these sectors. Extensions to the hospital and the installation of a power supply and adequate equipment should be completed. Emphasis will be placed on community services and communications, including the opening of new roads within the settlement and the search for a solution to the problem of the access road between Bangassou and M'boki.

25. Efforts will continue to encourage agricultural production and other income-generating activities, as well as to ensure that those assistance activities which could not be undertaken in 1993 are implemented in 1994. The planned quantities of seeds and agricultural tools have been delivered to the sites in good time.

26. The devaluation of the local currency throughout the Communauté Franco-Africaine (CFA) zone in west and central Africa has had a major impact on the two principal care and maintenance projects. An adjustment may be required after a further review of the impact of the devaluation on the implementation of the projects.

Local settlement

27. A solution is being sought to meet the educational needs of refugees in the Central African Republic. The country recently went through a period of three academic years during which schools were not functioning. There is a high percentage of secondary school age children amongst the Chadian and Sudanese refugees, as well as a large number of candidates for higher education, especially amongst the Chadians. Difficulties continue to be faced by the Sudanese refugee students due to the different medium of instruction in the country of asylum. A mission will be undertaken in 1994 to investigate different possibilities in the Central African Republic and to propose solutions for the 1994/1995 academic year. The proposed revised allocation provides for activities at a level similar to those in 1993/1994.

(c) 1995 programme proposals

Care and maintenance

28. It is planned to phase out food assistance in both Sudanese and Chadian refugee settlements, provided that the next harvest is successful and that the refugees have reached a satisfactory level of food self-sufficiency by the end of 1994. The food distribution will be targeted only to new arrivals and vulnerable groups who were not able to attain full self-reliance.

29. Assistance to Sudanese refugees at M'boki and to Chadians at Boubou settlement will continue in 1995 in basic services under the sectors of transport/logistics, domestic needs, water, education, health, shelter, community services, agricultural inputs, income-generation, legal and counselling services. Additional support will also be extended to the operational partner.

Voluntary repatriation

30. A provision has been made in the budget for the repatriation of some 300 refugees from the Central African Republic in 1995. However, if the peace negotiations between the Government of Chad and the CSNPD are successful and the political situation in southern Sudan improves during 1994, there may be a larger number of candidates for voluntary repatriation in 1995, for which a further allocation would be required.

Local settlement

31. Further adjustments to the allocation for the 1995/1996 education project may have to be made, following the recommendations of the education mission planned in 1994.

Special Programmes

Education Account

(a) **Variations in planned activities in 1993**

32. Scholarships for 40 refugee students were sponsored for the 1993/1994 academic year, as planned.

(b) **1994 planned implementation**

33. It is planned that the students already enrolled will continue their studies with UNHCR scholarships during the 1994/1995 academic year. Given the global funding constraints under the Education Account, the number of students has been maintained at the same level as in 1993.

(c) **1995 programme proposals**

34. The same criteria will be used for the 1995/1996 academic year and only those students who already have UNHCR scholarships under the Education Account will be able to continue their studies, unless further contributions are received to the Account during the course of 1994. The proposed allocation for the 1995/1996 academic year provides for scholarship assistance to 38 students.

Other Trust Funds

35. In 1994, it is planned to investigate the possibilities of transferring to the Central African Republic a certain number of Burundi and Rwandese refugee students who were covered under the German Albert Einstein Academic Initiative (DAFI) programme and who can no longer study in their present asylum countries. A mission from UNHCR's Programme and Technical Support Section is planned for this purpose. At the same time, the DAFI funds may be able to cover other new refugee students in the Central African Republic who could not benefit from the Education Account.

36. In 1993, support was provided to the CNR and assistance to refugees of various origins. It was agreed that these funds would be used for transport, telecommunications and electronic data processing equipment as well as computer training for CNR staff who implement UNHCR projects. Some of these funds were also used to purchase tools and seeds for the production of non-basic foods for both the Sudanese and Chadian refugees in order to enhance their food basket. Salaries of two Drivers were also foreseen. The project commenced in October 1993 and was scheduled to terminate in March 1994. However, the project has been extended because of delays in the delivery of some of the equipment.

Programme Delivery and Administrative Support Costs

(a) **Variations in planned activities in 1993**

37. The changes and the strengthening of UNHCR's presence in the country were implemented as proposed in the revised 1993 administrative budget. Slightly higher expenditures incurred for common staff costs were offset by savings resulting from delays in filling some of the new posts.

(b) **1994 planned implementation**

38. The 1994 revised estimate is higher than the initial estimate.

39. A Secretary/Telecoms Operator post and a Driver post were created for the Office in Bangui as of 1 June 1994. Two posts of GL.6 Field Assistants for M'boki and Bossangoa were also created as of 1 June 1994.

40. In addition to staff salaries and related costs, allocations are made for the improvement and rental of office premises, utilities and other operating costs for the Office of the Chief of Mission and the field locations. Transport, communications and office equipment are planned to be purchased in support of the expanded programme activities in the field.

(c) **1995 programme proposals**

41. Assuming a continued influx of refugees into the country, and given the distance between the capital and the refugee locations, it is expected that UNHCR's presence in Bangui and two field locations will be maintained at a similar level as in 1994 so as to ensure proper monitoring and implementation of the refugee assistance programme. All posts have therefore been extended until the end of 1995.

42. Provisions are also retained in the budget for the rental and operating expenses of office premises, staff travel and the running and maintenance costs of equipment and office supplies. The proposed allocation is slightly lower than the revised 1994 budget, mainly due to the reduced provision for procurement of non-expendable property which is planned to have been purchased in 1994.

UNHCR EXPENDITURE IN CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

(in thousands of United States dollars)

1993	1994		1995	
AMOUNT OBLIGATED	ALLOCATION APPROVED BY 1993 EXCOM	PROPOSED REVISED ALLOCATION	SOURCE OF FUNDS AND TYPE OF ASSISTANCE	PROPOSED ALLOCATION/ PROJECTION
GENERAL PROGRAMMES (1)				
1,511.4	–	–	EMERGENCY FUND	–
1,523.5	1,979.5	1,135.2	CARE AND MAINTENANCE	1,344.2
30.0	31.9	30.0	VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION	45.0
130.0	54.4	130.0	LOCAL SETTLEMENT	78.3
–	–	846.7	PROGRAMME DELIVERY See Annexes I a and II a	767.2
3,194.9	**2,065.8**	**2,141.9**	**SUB–TOTAL OPERATIONS**	**2,234.7**
–	–	32.8	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT See Annexes I b and II b	47.4
3,194.9	**2,065.8**	**2,174.7**	**T O T A L (1)**	**2,282.1**
SPECIAL PROGRAMMES (2)				
73.7	73.7	73.7	EDUCATION ACCOUNT 38 university scholarships	74.5
189.4	–	–	OTHER TRUST FUNDS Various Assistance	–
263.1	**73.7**	**73.7**	**T O T A L (2)**	**74.5**
3,458.0	**2,139.5**	**2,248.4**	**GRAND TOTAL (1+2)**	**2,356.6**